

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1-17 as follows:

1. (Amended) An anionic coloring agent comprising at least one spacer arm bound to said coloring agent.

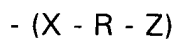
2. (Amended) The anionic coloring agent of claim 1 having the following formula:



wherein:

C_A is an anionic coloring agent comprising at least one chromophore group; and

B_E is said spacer-arm, which has the following chemical structure:



wherein:

X is a direct link or a group having the formula $-S(O)_s$, wherein s is 0, 1 or 2; $-NR_1-$, wherein

R_1 is hydrogen or a C_1 - C_{10} alkyl group;

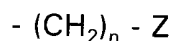
R is a C_1 - C_{10} straight or branched alkylene group;

Z is a polar group; and

R is an integer equal or higher than 1.

3. (Amended) The anionic coloring agent of claim 2, wherein said chromophore is selected from the group consisting of azo, anthraquinone, formazane, dioxazine, and ftalocianine, eventually metallized.

4. (Amended) The anionic coloring agent of claim 1, wherein said spacer arm has the formula:

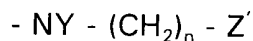


wherein:

n is an integer between 1 and 10;

Z is selected from the group consisting of halo, amino, cyano, hydroxyl, carboxyl, carboxamide, and their N alkyl, dialkyl derived from C₁-C₁₀, and sterified carboxyl.

5. (Amended) The anionic coloring agent of claim 1, wherein said spacer arm has the formula:



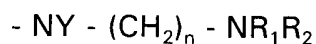
wherein:

Z' is hydrogen or is selected from the group consisting of halo, cyano, hydroxyl, carboxyl, carboxamide, and their N alkyl and dialkyl derived from C₁-C₁₀, sterified carboxyl with C₁₋₁₀ alkyl, -SR²-, where R² is hydrogen or C₁₋₁₀ alkyl;

n is an integer between 1 and 10; and

Y is hydrogen, alkyl or C₁₋₁₀ hydroxyalkyl.

6. (Amended) The anionic coloring of claim 5, wherein the spacer arm has the structure.



wherein

Y is hydrogen, hydroxyalkyl or C₁₋₁₀ alkyl;

n is an integer between 1 and 10; and

R₁ and R₂ are independently hydrogen or C₁₋₁₀ alkyl.

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7. (Amended) The anionic coloring agent of claim 1, wherein said spacer arm has the following structure:



wherein:

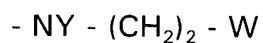
Y is hydrogen, hydroxyalkyl or C₁₋₁₀ alkyl;

X is -COOR₄, -CONH₂, -CN or -SO₃H;

n is an integer between 1 and 10; and

R₃ and R₄ are independently hydrogen or C₁₋₁₀ alkyl.

8. (Amended) The anionic coloring agent of claim 1, wherein said spacer arm has the following structure:



wherein:

Y is hydrogen, hydroxyalkyl or C₁₋₁₀ alkyl;

W is selected from the group consisting of -S-SO₃R₅ and -S-SO₃R₆; wherein R₅ and R₆ are independently hydrogen or C₁₋₁₀ alkyl.

9. (Amended) The anionic coloring agent of claim 1, comprising more than one spacer arm.

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10. (Amended) A coloring composition comprising at least one anionic coloring agent of claim 1.

11. (Amended) The coloring composition of claim 10, comprising at least one anionic coloring agent without spacer arms.

12. (Amended) A method of dyeing a fiber or fabric selected from the group consisting of cotton, regenerated cellulose, nylon and wool, comprising adding an anionic coloring agent of claim 1 to said fiber or fabric.

13. (Amended) A method of dyeing a substrate selected from the group consisting of leather, cardboard and paper, comprising adding an anionic coloring agent of claim 1 to said substrate.

14. (Amended) A method of dyeing a fiber or fabric selected from the group consisting of cotton, regenerated cellulose, nylon and wool, comprising adding the coloring composition of claim 10 to said fiber or fabric.

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15. (Amended) A method of dyeing a substrate selected from the group consisting of leather, cardboard and paper, comprising adding the coloring composition of claim 10 to said substrate.

16. (Amended) A substrate dyed with the anionic coloring agent of claim 1.

17. (Amended) A substrate, dyed with the anionic coloring agent of claim 10.

Please add the following new claims:

18. (To follow claim 14) A method of dyeing a fiber or fabric selected from the group consisting of cotton, regenerated cellulose, nylon and wool, comprising adding the coloring composition of claim 11 to said fiber or fabric.

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19. (To follow claim 15) A method of dyeing a substrate selected from the group consisting of leather, cardboard and paper, comprising adding the coloring composition of claim 11 to said substrate.